

PETER KENNEDY

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Dear Tom Flett,
How I enjoy your anti-Royalist screeds - I endorse everything you say.

A very fine idea to publish in "Orkney Herald". I hope they leave them stand as they are. Particularly I like your remarks in the last one about teams of children on platforms at music festivals. Obviously far the best plan is to let Orkney people aware of their own tradition and bring about a natural revival in the islands. As a matter of fact I found that there was already complete resistance amongst dancers to the Mainland way of doing things - they are too choosy about their music and bands to allow too much infiltration of the wrong kind.

You certainly got around in the short space of time and I am so glad that the Dounby folks were able to arrange dancers for you. Thank you for your remarks about the programme. All too short but I have had very nice letters from Orkney. Jack Tait I had great difficulty in recording. I got him one day - unknown - in the tailor's shop telling a story !

I think it was Mrs Findlater who told me that "The Bride's Reel" was any reel performed by women only at a wedding - I am sure she told me they once did it with 16 on one occasion. But then they were only starting to rack their brains when we were there - the gap of time between would have given them all more time to talk about the old days with each other.

I was amazed to hear that the R.S.C.D.S. has published the old traditional Eightsome reel - obviously someone got wind of your visit to Orkney ! I never heard it called "Axum" before - what's the origin of the name ? Certainly the older fiddlers never made a distinct difference between strathspey and reel tempo but went gradually from one to the other. It was pleasant to hear the reel now called a strathspey "The Smith's a gallant fireman" (after words of song) played in Orkney as a proper reel. If you're interested in the local music you ought particularly to hear the recordings of old John Fraser of Birsay.

Were you ever in contact with Ronnie Aim the leading light of The Orkney Strathspey and Reel (I was disappointed with their name !) Society ? His address is Post Office, Holm. The Society might easily revive the dances for social occasions.

the) Once more many thanks for sending advance copies. I will pass
m on to the Library after my father has seen them.

Peter Kennedy